

**In the Specification**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 30 with the amended paragraph as follows:

41 It should be noted that it has already been provided to use an NPN transistor operating as a ~~dipole~~ diode, its base being unconnected, and a positive voltage with respect to the collector being applied to the emitter, for example in European patent application EP-A-0881693 (B3564) or in Japanese patent application 5561828 filed on November 1, 1978. Both of these applications are hereby incorporated by reference. However, these documents provide the use of such components as a voltage reference. There is thus in fact no relation with the envisaged applications. Indeed, a voltage reference is intended for exhibiting a very vertical characteristic, similar to characteristic 10 shown in Fig. 2, but only over a current range from a few microamperes to a few milliamperes while the present invention relates to protection components that can conduct currents of several amperes. The transistors provided in the two mentioned documents would in fact have, for currents on the order of one ampere, a clipping characteristic with a positive dynamic resistance.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 3 with the amended paragraph as follows:

42 According to another aspect of the present invention, the doping of the intrinsic base region, that is, of the portion of P-type region 23 located under emitter region 24, must be chosen within a predetermined range. In particular, it is advocated to choose an intrinsic base region having a doping level corresponding to a resistance under 1500 ohms/square.